

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the above-referenced application. In accordance with 37 C.F.R. 1.121, as revised January 21, 2004, claims are labeled as “Original”, “Currently amended”, “Canceled”, “Withdrawn”, “Previously presented”, “New”, or “Not entered”.

Support for new claim 12 can be found on page 22, line 7 through page 23, line 2.

Support for new claim 13 can be found on page 23, lines 10-16.

Support for new claim 14 can be found on page 23, lines 9-10.

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently amended) A method of preparing a vector, the method comprising steps of:

~~providing at least two isolated nucleic acid molecules, each of which contains a portion of vector sequence;~~

~~providing at least one isolated nucleic acid molecules containing insert sequence; and~~

providing at least two collections of nucleic acid molecules, wherein each of said collections comprises at least two isolated nucleic acids and wherein each of said isolated nucleic acids comprises a portion of vector sequence;

selecting an individual nucleic acid molecule, or portion of a nucleic acid molecule, from each of said collections; and

admixing the selected nucleic acid molecules or portions with one another under linkage conditions so that a hybrid molecule in which each of the ~~isolated~~ selected nucleic acid molecules or portions is linked together is produced.

2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein:

the ~~isolated~~ selected nucleic acid molecules or portions each contain at least one overhang that is complementary with an overhang on at least one of the other selected molecules or portions.

3. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein:

the ~~isolated~~ selected nucleic acid molecules comprise RNA or can be transcribed into RNA, and wherein each such RNA molecule contains ~~contain~~ at least one ~~intronic element~~ splicing recognition site that is characterized by an ability to such that each such RNA molecule is able to trans-splice with a compatible ~~intronic element~~ splicing recognition site on at least one ~~of the other~~ such RNA molecules molecule, and

the step of admixing comprises admixing under ~~ligation~~ trans-splicing conditions.

4. (Original) The method of any one of claims 1-3, further comprising a step of: introducing the hybrid molecule into a cell.

5. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1 wherein each nucleic acid molecule in each ~~of the isolated vector molecules~~ said collections contains at least a portion of a vector element selected from the group consisting of replication elements, vector detection elements, expression elements, gene fusion elements, protein fusion elements, polylinker elements, and combinations thereof.

6-10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently amended) A method of preparing a vector, the method comprising steps of:

providing at least two ~~isolated nucleic acid molecules~~ collections of nucleic acid molecules, wherein each of said collections comprises at least two isolated nucleic acids;

selecting an individual nucleic acid molecule from each of said collections, wherein each of which said selected nucleic acid molecules contains a portion of vector sequence and wherein each of which each of said selected nucleic acid molecules comprises a single-stranded portion at a terminus thereof, at least two such single-stranded portions being complementary
complementary to one another; and

admixing the nucleic acid molecules with one another under conditions that allow hybridization of the complementary single-stranded portions.

12. (New) The method of claim 1 comprising a further step of;

providing at least one isolated nucleic acid molecule containing insert sequence prior to the step of admixing.

13. (New) The method of claim 3 wherein:

the selected acid molecules further contain catalytic intron sequences that direct the trans-splicing event.

14. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein:

the step of admixing comprises admixing under ligation conditions.